Iron County Register

BY ELI D. AKE.

IRONTON, - - - - MISSOURI.

A SONG OF VACATION.

Blue distance of mountain, white sparkle of sea,
And a song in the winds, amid maple and pine,
Over oat-field and rye-field, a ripple of glee,
And everywhere music, in rain or in shine;
Glad voices of children, sweet warble of birds,
And words to tunes wedded, and tunes without words;
Hurrah for vacation! vacation is here!
The hope and the crown of the beautiful year.

A truce to declensions, a rest from the verb,
That puzzle of puzzles in tongues which are new,
A search over hilltops and vale for the herb
Called "Heartease," bright, blooming and spangled with dew.
Good-by to the schoolrooms, the books and the bells,
And away to the ocean, the streams and the dells;
Hurrah for vacation! vacation is here,
The joyous reward of the diligent year.

A pause to small fingers in climbing the scale;
For hours of practice take hours at ease,
Till the rose tints the cheek where the lily was pale,
And the limbs fairly long for a race with the breeze.
And oh for the brookside! and oh for the hay!
And oh for the orchard this blithe summer day!
Hurrah for vacation! vacation is here,
The merriest time in the fast-flitting year.

Turn, father, awhile from the ledger and tool,
And, mother, put by the torn jacket and gown;
You, too, need a play-spell in life's busy school,
A recess from labor in country or town.
There are mouths to be filled and wee feet to be shod,
Yet gather your strength by a stop on the road,
And take your vacation! just once in the year
Be glad with the bairns that vacation is here.

From the shadowy nooks in forest and wold,
From hedges thick set with the berry and brier,
From mornings of pearl, and from evenings of gold,
A soft invitation ascends, "Come up higher,
Shake off the world's dust, and forget the world's din,
To the house of your Father, in peace enter in;"
And thanks for vacation! vacation is here,
The charm and the feast of the beautiful year.

—*Margaret E. Sangster, in Youth's Companion.*

THE FATAL FOURTH.

A Tragedy.

"Frederic," said my wife, in the tone of a dying martyr, "do you really mean to let our children have fireworks on the Fourth?"

"I do, my dear."

"Then I know something dreadful will happen. Think of Tom."

"Tom is eleven years old. He must take his chances like other young scamps of his ilk."

"But, Frederic, there are Frank, and Bertie, and Jenny, and Lil, and the baby. Oh dear! I know something will happen." And my wife shook her head prophetically and sighed.

Here my sister-in-law, Wilhelmina, broke in.

"Never fear; your children will all be spared to grow up, Mary. Naughty children always live. For my part, I think fire-works are *fun*," she adds.

Now, Mina was a very emphatic young lady, with the most positive and unchangeable views on the conduct of life. Miss Italics, I used to call her, because she was all for emphasis, and yet she was such a small type of a girl.

"Mina, your tastes are entirely too loud," my wife said.

The young person tossed her saucy head, arched a pair of delicate eyebrows, then bounced up and went to the window, looking down an avenue that leads up to our country house. Now Mina never bounced up without jerking down the skirts of a small jacket she was fond of wearing. It was a sort of cut-away coat arrangement, with buttons behind, a bit of vest in front, a dash of white linen bosom, and a stand-up collar. To-day the rig was brown silk, with bits of gold-color peeping from mysterious linings, and cordings. Mina wore her fair hair short. She shook it out of cold water every morning, parted it on one side with masculine freedom; then putting in a pair of turquoise ear-rings, bought, with feminine coquetry, to match her eyes, she considered, in her own concise language, "that top piece fixed." Now Mina was a girl for which the days of good Walter Scott, that maker of heroines, would have furnished no model. Cooper's young hunters never bore such a maiden as Mina safely to the arms of her family. Hannah More would have used my sister-in-law simply as a frightful example. A French novelist would ascribe to her more wickedness than poor Mina would even know how to name, and then make a dazzling study. In short, Mina's contradictions in character would have bothered Shakspeare himself, and exhausted his subtle involutions of language in painting a creature at once so rude and so gentle, so bold and so shy, such a jolly fellow and such a very woman. She was the outgrowth of an unsettled social state, of a day when women, having struggled out of their old places, have not yet quite jostled comfortably into their new ones, and so, feeling a little insecure, they incline to be defiant. Mina belonged to a woman's club, where, in the daintiest of silks and the sweetest thing in lace, she talked of feminine ability in every department of severe labor and scientific research. On returning home she always went to bed with a headache, but was none the less ready to declare herself fit for marine service, or any other work commonly held proper for men only.

"If McAllister comes to spend the Fourth, he'll bring all sorts of fire-works," remarked this enthusiastic young woman, not disguising that she was looking out for McAllister down the avenue.

"Mina," said my wife, "don't speak of men without a decent prefix to their names; it isn't pretty."

"I don't want to be pretty," answers Mina; "I want to be clever and independent and *strong*." Here she shook all her bangles, and examined a pearl ring on her slender forefinger.

"You want to be mannish, don't you?" said I teasingly.

"Quite the contrary—I want to be *sensible*." Then, with a careless yawn, as if she had said a matter-of-course thing, she added, "I think I shall take up geology."

"You'd better be a nice womanly girl, and take up a husband," quoth her sister.

"*Take in*, you mean," I suggest, by way of revenge."

"Not at all," answers the ready little minx; "she means *take up*. Men can't arrive at any elevated position unless we *do* take 'em up."

"Oh, Aunt Billy," screamed Tom, rushing into the room, followed by Muff, our old terrier, a sleepy, superannuated pet, of which the children were very fond.

"Tom, don't call your aunt Billy," says my wife.

"Yes, he shall. My name is Wilhelmina, or William, and Billy is *good* for short. Go on, Tom."

"Aunt Billy, McAllister is coming from the station, and he's got his arms full of fire-works—Roman candles, and rockets, and pin-wheels, and *every thing*," says the excited Tom.

"Bravo!" cries Mina.

"And Mr. Worth is with him, and ain't got so much as a cracker," adds Tom, with proper disgust.

"Humph! I never *did* like Mr. Worth," says Mina, sympathetically.

"He likes you, I bet, Aunt Billy; but you won't marry him, will you, Aunt Billy?" asks Tom, who was at that tender age when the small boy is quite jealous of the affections of a pretty aunt.

"Marry! Nonsense, child, I wouldn't marry *any* man," answers Mina, with very marked italics. "I have to make a career."

"What's that?" says Tom.

"Why, it's a—a—it's writing a great book, or painting a picture, or going on the stage, or— Well, it's showing a woman is just as clever as a man."

"But a woman ain't," says the ungallant Tom.

"You think so because you're only a child, and ignorant."

"I ain't ignorant neither," answers my eldest hope, whose grammar weakens as his zeal strengthens. "I say a woman can't lift a barrel of flour, and a man can. So."

"Like your father, Master Tom, you confound muscle with brains. A woman can do much *better* than lift a barrel of flour."

"Ho! women git scared," says Tom. "But never mind; you're a brick, Aunt Billy, and you sha'n't marry any body —not McAllister neither."

"Ah, now, Tom, I *might* marry McAllister."

"Gus McAllister is a fortune-hunter," I remarked, gravely.

"He's very handsome," says my perverse sister-in-law, "and has very judicious views on the Woman Question—hasn't he, Muff?" At this she pulls old Muff's ear, but having gone to sleep, he makes no sign.

"Humbug!" I exclaim. "He's trying to please you by humoring your follies. Now Worth is a man that—"

"That undertakes to make all the world accept his opinions."

"He is very moderate and reasonable," I say, warmly.

"He *isn't*," Miss Italics contradicts, flatly; "he stares a solemn disapproval of what he doesn't like."

"That was when you remarked you'd like to put on boys' clothes and run away to sea, wasn't it?"

"Never mind when it was;" and Mina flushes slightly, for Worth did subdue her that time by looking gravely straight into her blue eyes. "But I wouldn't marry a man who hasn't proper views on the Woman Question—a man like John Worth—if—if—"

"If he gave you the chance," I suggest, maliciously.

"How do you know he *hasn't* given me the chance?"

"Because he's a man of sense," I answer, knowing Mina will retort, and I shall get at the truth.

"Then the 'man of sense' has condescended to nonsense," says Mina, in scornful mockery.

"Nonsense? Oh, that's yourself, I suppose."

She noticed the slur by a look of ineffable contempt, and went on, helping her speech by a dramatic shake of bangles and bare arm: "And nonsense—*refused* him."

"Mina," exclaims her sister, "you ought to love a man like Worth. He'd make a sensible girl of you."

"Thanks for the implied compliment to the present state of my wits, Mrs. Mary. As to love, Arthur Helps lays down, as the first rule of advancing a career of distinguished public usefulness, 'Avoid engrossing affections.'"

"McAllister's brought lots o' pinwheels," screams Tom from the window, and calls out through the glass, "Hello!"

Muff barks, then goes to sleep within the same second. Mina jerks down the brown jacket snugly over her trim shoulders and waist, feels the little upright collar to make sure it's not askew, then lets her hand wander lightly over the ear-rings and the short fair curls, and, satisfied she is all right, turns to the door.

In comes McAllister ahead. "Oh, Mr. McAllister, I'm *so* glad to see you!" cries Miss Italics, with effusion; "and how good you are to bring fire-works! I *love* to hold a Roman candle while it fizzes off."

"A woman's dress is hardly safe near Roman candles," remarks Worth, as he bows and puts out his hand.

"Oh, are *you* here?" says Mina, by way of welcome; and in a minute she is lost in the embrasure of a window, unpacking endless varieties of rockets and "pieces." McAllister stoops over her shoulder, and the excited children, with Tom at their head, crowd about, poking little fingers into paper convolutions, to find out, as Bertie says, "whereabouts the bang-bang is w'apped up in 'em."

By-and by we all go to dinner, and, as usual, Mina drags the conversation toward what she calls the Woman Question. Her style of argument is not logical, and the sequence of her remarks is peculiar. She throws down the gauntlet in this fashion:

"Women as lawyers are cleverer than men, and I'm *glad of it*."

"They are, indeed," McAllister agrees. "Miss Brief, of Nevada, won a case for a man who, without doubt, murdered his wife."

"She ought to be ashamed of herself," says Mina, snubbing McAllister, and hurting her own cause.

The young fellow strokes his blonde mustache, laughs, and tries not to look annoyed.

"But women *do* succeed in *all* professions," Mina goes on, aggressively. Then she looks at Worth, aiming to draw him into a discussion. He guards a grave silence.

McAllister says, "Of course."

"The President of our club has written a book," she says, looking directly at Worth.

"And an excellent one," he answers.

"Indeed! So you concede as much as that?" This with the utmost sarcasm.

"An excellent work," he continues. "It's on cookery."

"Oh!" Mina says, a little chagrined, "I didn't hear what the subject was." Then, without any provocation, she asserts, defiantly, "Well, George Eliot is a woman, and she writes better than *any* man."

"Oh, far better," McAllister agrees, eagerly.

"Nobody disputes George Eliot's ability, nor the ability of many other female writers," Worth says.

"Oh, indeed!"—again with sarcasm; "and what is it you *do* dispute, Mr. Worth?"

"Nothing. I hate dispute."

"But you despise the intellect of woman."

"Please say *women*," Worth requests. "The sort of rhetoric that gives *woman* in the singular reminds me of the stupid public speakers who, for lack of wit and power, keep pounding on some new-fangled phrase that catches the vulgar ear."

After a moment's pause, Mina flies at his eyes with a new assertion: "A woman ought to do every thing she knows how to do."

"When a woman, a man, or any other creature does what she, he, or it knows how to do, the work is worthy of respect," Worth says.

"Well, sir, and don't women do what they know how to do?"

"Some of them. A woman who is willing to learn an art or trade by the plodding processes that insure thoroughness is to be respected and encouraged. But too many women try to jump at results, and are impatient of discipline in work, then feel agrieved because their unskilled labor commands no reward. There's a large class, too, who only talk —talk eternally of their so-called inferior place in society, but really make no patient, continued exertion toward filling any of the positions that are occupied by men."

"Do you mean me?" asks Mina.

"How can I? During the past year you have studied German one month, book-keeping two weeks, porcelain-painting six weeks, botany about as long, logic—under my tuition—one hour. You have begun to write a story, and—"

"That will do," Mina says. "You mean I am too stupid to succeed with any thing."

"No, but like many young persons, you haven't the power of steady and consistent application."

"I've known boys as bad," Mina remarks, tartly.

"But boys are liable to be thrown upon the world and taught by privations and hard knocks."

"Perhaps *I* ought to be thrown upon the world, and taught by privations and hard knocks," Mina laughs, nervously, and tries to look careless.

For once Worth answers inconsistently.

"Women make a grand blunder in depreciating their own value—in straining after what they can't have, instead of cultivating what they have."

"And, in your opinion, have they *any thing?*" asks the sharp young lady.

"Yes; so much charm and so much power as women that a man wonders why she"—here Worth grew inaccurate in his numbers, and looking full at Mina, went on—"why she should be eternally trying to make an anomaly of herself by aping manners that are against her nature, and that she only keeps up in a spirit of bravado." Worth helped himself quietly to green peas; there was a little awkward silence. I felt Worth's chances were over, and Mina smiled sweetly on McAllister, who was flattering her most transparently.

At four o'clock the next morning—the Fourth of July—my son Frank, with a red soldier cap on his head, exploded a torpedo by my bedside, yelled, "I say, papa, it's Fourth o' July!" then danced out of the room like a wild Indian, poor old Muff barking madly at his heels. Bertie, aged five, and Jenny, a wise little woman of eight, I heard in a loud quarrel about fire-crackers on the front piazza.

"Oh dear!" sighed my wife, "something dreadful is sure to happen."

By breakfast-time Tom had become an ungovernable young brute, and could talk nothing but "soldiers," and "cannon," and "crackers in a barrel," and "rockets to-night." He had a face all powder-smeared, and very dirty hands. The younger imps followed his lead, and little Lil's pinafore was burned through in three places. Muff caught the spirit of the day, and jumped and barked as well as his infirmities permitted, retiring at intervals under the piazza steps and into shady corners to enjoy his frequent naps.

At the height of noonday heat the children formed a grand parade. Mina encouraged them from the midst of a heap of colored paper, which she cut into caps and belts and warlike rigging of all sorts. An express wagon brought Worth's contributions, in the shape of wooden swords, drums, fifes and endless fire-works.

"We thought you wasn't goin' to bring us nothin', Mr. Worth," says my eldest son, with that charming frankness and in that pure English peculiar to the gentle youth.

"Aunt Billy said you were 'too disgustingly prudent,'" says Jenny, who can spell long words.

"And Aunt Billy thaid," screams Master Bertie, with all his curls in his eyes—"Aunt Billy thaid you wath an awful gooth."

"You see," answered Mr. Worth, placidly, and handing out the playthings, "how foolish and mistaken children can be."

Mina winced under his calm good-nature, then retired to a shady corner of the piazza, pinned a rose in McAllister's button-hole, and asked him to fan her. This appearing to have no effect on Worth, she called for fire-crackers, and with several bunches open in her lap, she held a fuse over them, and nonchalantly lighted single ones in her fingers.

"You'll set fire to your dress," said Worth.

"I'll take care of her," answered McAllister, sharply.

"If that dress should catch," continued Worth, "it wouldn't be easy to put it out." She wore a white muslin jacket to-day, with a sky-blue vest. Mina, by way of response, fired a cracker from her fingers.

"Brava!" exclaimed McAllister.

Worth turned away to answer Bertie, who whined, "When is we doin' to fire all the fings off?"

"When you take off all that paper stuff, you may come down to the foot of the garden, and I'll put some crackers in a barrel for you."

"There's a hogshead down there," shouted Tom—"a big dry hogshead lyin' on its side. Let's put lots in it."

"As many as you like," said Worth; "but take off those paper caps. They're dangerous."

"Nonsense," Mina interfered; "let the poor things wear their caps."

"Poor fings wear their caps!" echoes Bertie, looking aggrieved.

"Children," I ordered, "take off every bit of that paper immediately; and, Mina, you ought to be ashamed of teaching them to be fool-hardy and stubborn."

Miss Italics laughed, threw up a rose-bud, and caught it skillfully, while the whole troop of young imps tore down the garden path at Worth's heels.

Passing near Mina and McAllister a few minutes later I overheard her say, archly, "I should be a very hard wife to manage."

"You shall have your own way in every thing," the young fellow answered.

In desperation, I called Mina away. Taking her aside, I said, "Mina, Mina, take care what you do."

She laughed again in my very face, and answered, "I shall marry the man I like best in spite of *every body*." Then she jerked down that jacket with determination, felt the ear-rings and curls, and marched straight back to McAllister's side.

My wife shed tears of vexation, and declared: "Mina will make us all wretched if she marries that man. He wants her money."

I could only call the girl a perverse and silly creature, who deserved her fate. She had chosen a position where Worth, from the foot of the garden, could see her side face as she coquetted openly with McAllister.

After a little, Tom came tearing at full speed toward the house. Out of breath, he bounded up the piazza steps, crying, hoarsely, "He's killed, he's dead. Where's the ice-water?" then rushed for the dining-room.

"It's Bertie," screamed my wife; "its my darling. Oh, I knew something would happen." With the word Mary raced down the garden path. I was scared enough to run too, but Mina caught up with and passed us both. At a glance I saw the children were safe, though Mary still called wildly for her Bertie, who was roaring lustily under her very eyes, "He'th dead, he'th dead." Jenny explained through her sobs, "He's dead inside the hogshead."

Then, for the first, I noticed the old empty hogshead lying on its side, and from the open end protruded the feet of Mr. Worth, while smoke and the smell of powder poured out all around them.

Mina rushed to the fatal spot, and helped me to lay hold of Worth and drag him out. She had turned pale as death, and cried out, with delightful femine logic: "You're dead, dear. Forgive me." Then: "Don't die, John dear, don't die. I love you."

I was stooping over the body from the other side; the head was just emerging from the hogshead, and the face was turned toward me. It was uncommonly radiant for a corpse, and I heard the dead man whisper, "Hush! it's a blunder. I'm not hurt. Don't want to mortify her. Put me to bed," and John became rigid again.

McAllister drawing near, Mina cried out, savagely: "Don't touch him. *Nobody* but *me* shall touch him. John, dear John!" Then, sobbing, she bathed his face in the ice-water that Tom had just brought.

Bertie all this time never stopped howling, "He'th dead, he'th dead;" and Jenny heaving a profound but decorous sigh, said, "Yes, papa, our poor Muff is dead."

"Muff?" I questioned; "where? how?"

"In the hogshead," answered Tom. "We put crackers in it, and didn't know Muff had crawled inside for a nap. Mr. Worth went in to get him out."

"Oh!" sobbed Mina, "and killed himself with the powder smoke. Why don't you send that man for the doctor?" This last was to me, and indicating McAllister.

The suggestion cleared the situation for me, and, after drawing out the wooly heap that represented our deceased Muff, I politely requested McAllister to run for a doctor. He did so, but with a very bad grace.

Under the scare of seeing Worth lying still and speechless, the children were awe-struck. Only Bertie grieved aloud over Muff's lifeless body.

Covering John's face, I called Dennis, the gardener, who was safely stupid, and we carried the dead-weight to a couch in an upper room. Then John whispered, "Send her away," for Mina had followed close, all pale and grief-stricken. I told Mina to wait outside, and let me use means to restore him to consciousness; but she declared, with all her emphasis turned to a new use: "I *won't* leave him; I *won't*. I'll die too. Oh, I *know* he's dead. I *know* it."

"You go away," whispered Worth.

I went, and listened from outside. There were sobs and moans for a while; then came a great cry of joy, followed by a silence. Soon Mina appeared, all rosy and glad. "He's come to consciousness," she said, "and, and—"

"We are going to be married," added John, in a voice too strong for a man who had just escaped death.

The doctor arriving, of course found all the symptoms of recent asphyxia, while John cast queer glances at me over the leaned head.

McAllister caught a pleasure-train, and returned to the city with other tired-out and disgusted excursionists.

Later John felt able to sit on the piazza in the moonlight, depending on a firm grip of Mina's hand to keep him from a relapse.

My wife said, "I knew something was going to happen if the children had fire-works."

"But it's nothing dreadful," says Mina, in the softest of voices. "I told you I'd marry the man I liked best, and all the time I liked best the one who told me the truth, and didn't make a fool of me."

"But you refused him," I reminded her.

"Pshaw! that's nothing. I quarreled with him too, but I didn't mean it."

On the spot I gave up ever trying to understand the real feelings or real motives of any creature of Mina's sex.

They were married last week, and Mina has just been told that it was her own hasty outburst of affection that led to the dreadful asphyxia and its happy consequences. She says she wouldn't have married if she had known it. Arguing from precedents, of course she doesn't mean that.

The children knew nothing but the apparent facts. To insure prudence and obedience on festive occasions we have only to say, "Remember poor Uncle Worth and the Fourth of July." Like little Cæsars at mention of the ides of March, they all become sad and thoughtful, and consequently tractable.—*Harper's Bazar.*

Scandinavian Drinking Bouts.

Learned commentators on the Northern antiquities help us to conjure up the scene of one of those drinking bouts. It is a bitter evening in winter; the war galleys have been laid up in ordinary for the season, and the time hangs heavy on the hands of the vikings. The better part of the morning passed in sleeping off the effects of the previous debauch; and, after breaking their fasts with unimpaired appetites, the listless warriors have roused themselves for exercise, and have been stretching their muscles over manly sports. All the same, the short day has dragged, and they have welcomed the heavy fall of the shadows. The feast has been spread in rude profusion; the huge salted joints have been picked to the bone and tossed to the hounds; the bare tables on the trestles have been cleared away, and the boisterous company, breathing hard after the meal, has settled itself down for an earnest carouse. Though the hall is lighted with numerous torches, it is no easy matter to distinguish objects, for the smoke from the fire blazing in the middle is curling up to the rafters of the lofty roof, in vain attempts to escape by the smoke holes. But all around the revelers are grouped on the rough benches, while at the end, on a dais above their followers, sit the chiefs in the places of honor. Tables may be dispensed with. The great horns, with the cup-bearers, or horn-bearers, in attending to replenish them, pass swiftly from hand to hand. There are toasts and "sentiments," and long-winded speeches as well, on solemn occasions of ceremony. The scalds sitting apart, their eyes "in a fine frenzy rolling," chant the memorable deeds of gods and heroes, and especially the feats of the present company, in interminable stanzas more or less melodious; and the fierce revelers chime in with the chorus till roof and rafters ring again. Naturally the fun grows fast and furious. Thanks to the form of the drinking vessels, there is no setting them down between pulls. It was the anticipation of the fashion of the hard drinkers of a later age, who guarded against heel-taps on the sly by knocking the bottoms of their glasses. It was the pride of those "jolly good fellows" of the North to take off the contents of the horn at a breath. The muddy ale and the headier mead must have muddled weaker or more delicate brains. As it was, there was little intelligence to be confused, and not much wit to be expelled, though, if the Sagas are to be trusted, those case-hardened topers are to be credited occasionally with some bit of dry humor. But the warm blood grew better still as the liquor went coursing through the fevered veins, and quarrels began that led on to bloody feuds afterward, if comrades prevented their being settled on the spot. More than once in such a banqueting hall some epic in action had its sanguinary *denouement*—as when the Burgundians, prompted by the vengeance of Kriemhild, beset the heroes of the Niebelungenlied on the banks of the Danube; and after Rudiger, in the sublimity of his chivalry, had handed his shield to Hagen, there began "the slaughter grim and great."—*Blackwood's Magazine.*

The Novelist's Secret.

A novel in which the characters are carefully drawn, in which they act upon one another as they might do in familiar social life, is felt to be tame—the stimulus is wanting. The more contrasts we get between appearances and realities, prosperity and adversity, virtues and vices, happiness and misery, wealth and poverty, joy and despair, between yesterday and to-day, the more the tale answers to a demand; for whereas the happiness of real life consists in the fewness and moderation of these contrasts, the harmony of circumstances, the fitness of the man for his work and place, the gentle sequence of events, the novel pleases by showing life in a directly opposite aspect by crowding it with startling transitions, setting every condition cheek by jowl with its opposite, vulgarity with high place; virtuous seeming with inward depravity; by caricaturing the instability of earthly things, reducing the most assured position to a mere house of cards; by the constant contrast between what seems and what is. Of course contrasts, as stock in trade, cost the inferior artist very little. He regards them as self-acting; they are to impress by their own force and weight; but they are not the less a supreme test of power. The writer who can apprehend and portray all the features of a strong contrast of passion and feeling is master of his craft.

In *Land and Water* we read: "In the elegant little weighing scales in which we can sit and have our weights taken at our railway stations and elsewhere we have a trustworthy index of health and the surest beacon to warn us against the approach of insidious diseases which steal on us unawares, and which, once having fastened upon us, are quite incurable. The reason of this is that the fat of our body is the first to come in health and the first to go in disease; so, by weighing every week we see that our store of fat is still with us, or that it is being inordinately consumed."

GENERAL.

One city heard from is sa[illegible] the new census. Lowell, Ma[illegible] larger number of inhabitants [illegible] body living there expected [illegible] found.

W. H. Vanderbilt, it is anno[illegible] authoritatively, pays for bringing [illegible] Alexandrian obelisk over. He st[illegible] lated that it should not cost over $[illegible] 000.

Wm. Banks, a noted Liverpool ship builder, has left $300,000 to his granddaughter, Susan Meyers, the wife of a laborer at Greenpoint, opposite New York city.

The uncertainties of the theatrical business are illustrated by the fact that Miss Neilson, after a season of great success in the East, has been playing to almost empty houses in San Francisco.

Ten families will soon depart for Zaconia, on Puget Sound, Washington Territory, under the direction of the Brooklyn (N. Y.) Co-operative Colonization Society. They will settle under the Homestead Law.

A tramp consented to do a small job at digging post-holes at Carson, Nev., though labor was contrary to his custom. He returned to his employer's house in an hour, threw down his spade, and said he had changed his mind. He had found $130 worth of gold bars which some miner had buried.

Laboulaye, President of the Franco-American Union, states that Bartholdi's statue of Liberty would be ready for erection in the harbor of New York in 1883, the centenary of the Treaty of Versailles, which concluded peace between England and America.

The people of Maryland demand that the law against dueling be enforced. The people of neighboring States have got a notion of going to Maryland to fight their duels, and the results are very fatal to the cattle pastured near the places where the deadly combats take place.

A society for prosecuting the systematic excavation of ancient sites in Egypt is in process of formation. Several Egyptologists have promised their support. Miss Edwards is contemplating a lecturing tour in the United States, with the object of assisting the fund.

A great effort is being made to improve the dietary of the German soldiers. It is now recognized that it is not sufficient to merely supply a man with enough bread and meat to keep him alive, but that his bodily vigor, and consequently his efficiency as a soldier, will be increased if his diet partake of a more varied character, and if cooked in a more varied manner.

Miss Susie Peary, seventeen years old, a student in the New York Normal College, recently swam from the foot of Ninety-sixth Street, North River, to the dock above Fort Lee, a distance of more than five miles. The tide and wind were against her. She has not been in the water for two years to swim any considerable distance. Before long she is to make a ten-mile swim up the Hudson to Yonkers.

Mons. Le Page Renouf suggests that the ancient obelisks of Egypt might have been intended to serve as lightning conductors. The evidence is found in an inscription from the temple at Edfu, published by Brugsch-Bey in September, 1875. In the thirty-fourth line of this text "two large obelisks" are expressly said to have been constructed "for the purpose of cleaving asunder the storm-cloud of heaven."

Old Mrs. Sheppard collects about $2,000 in rents every July at Dayton, Ohio, and puts the money in a bureau drawer. As she lives alone, the folly of keeping so much money by her was long ago explained to her. In 1878 masked robbers entered the house and took the treasure. In 1879 the robbery was repeated in precisely the same manner. This year she hid it carefully, but the rascals choked her until she told them where it was. She now promises to put the receipts for 1881 in the bank

A boy temporarily in charge of an elevator in the Syracuse (N. Y.) Savings Bank building, thought he would like to see the elevator work. He pulled the rope, and to his surprise the elevator ascended rapidly. Reaching the top it struck and reversed itself, breaking the starting rope, and the car descended rapidly to the bottom. When the car was raised the body of the engineer was found beneath it. He had been killed instantly.

The Dumas family has always been remarkable for strength and address. One night at the play Gen Dumas, the grandfather of Dumas the younger, flung a man out of a stage box on to the stage. Dumas the elder was of Herculean strength, and Dumas the younger excels in all games of strength and skill. He is a master juggler, and he can put a frame of knives round a human head leaning against a board with the most consummate surety of hand. George Sand was a brilliant pupil of Dumas the younger, and in her later years she used to amuse herself for days with this perilous pastime.

The agitation for seats for shop and saloon girls has taken practical shape in Scotland. Recently a staff of ladies made a tour of the chief warehouses and shops in the leading thoroughfares of Edinburgh, and made inquiries as to the accommodation in the desired direction. The subject had been agitated in a daily newspaper for some time back, and the committee found that in several instances shopkeepers and milliners had provided seats for their saleswomen, to be used during "the intervals of business." No fewer than 146 establishments were visited, and in only four instances were the ladies met with personal rudeness.

A letter from Bordeaux, France, gives a frightful account of the leech ponds ten miles from that city. The leeches are regularly fed with the blood of old horses, which are driven into the ponds, where the leeches suck them till they grow faint. Then they are taken out and allowed to graze in the fields till they regain a little strength, when they are again driven into the pond, and the process is repeated till at last they are dragged out, bloodless and dead. A well known English veterinary surgeon, who has done much to mitigate the horrors of some of the Continental veterinary schools, has taken this matter of the Bordeaux leech ponds in hand.